

# UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 15, 2017 6:30 PM

## Minutes

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Chair Cynthia Seybolt, David Edson, Johnathan Drew, Carolyn Gregson, David Glidden

**Staff/Municipal Representatives Present:** Andrew Strniste, Planning Director; Peter Bennett, Energy Committee Chair

**Others Present:** Daniel Lee, Resident

[6:25] The Planning Commission convened at Underhill Town Hall at 6:25pm.

[6:40] A quorum was not established until 6:40, at which time, Chair C. Seybolt called the meeting to order.

[6:40] Energy Committee Chair, Peter Bennett, was in attendance to discuss the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's memorandum and questions. He advised that the Energy Committee did not feel as if they had the authority to answer the questions presented in the memorandum. Commissioner Gregson advised him that they would appreciate the Energy Committee performing an analysis and providing any input. Commissioner Edson expressed his opinion that another committee deferring too, and not overstepping their authority was refreshing. Mr. Bennett advised that he was confident that substantial deference was better than due consideration, and that the Planning Commission and Energy Committee should investigate what is required to get a Plan certified. Staff Member Strniste discussed the process of getting a Plan certified and the implications of not getting a Plan certified. Chair C. Seybolt informed the Commission and Mr. Bennett that at the last meeting, the Commission chose not to seek certification; however, the Commission seemed unaware that they had agreed to that action. While the Commission did agree to table the discussion until after July, Mr. Bennett advised that he did not see a time issue with getting a Plan certified.

[6:51] Staff Member Strniste provided an overview of how the certification process would work, as well as explained at which point the Town's Plan would have to be consistent with the Regional Planning Commission's Plan.

[6:54] Mr. Bennett proceeded to provide the Planning Commission an overview of the Energy Committee's recommended answers to CCRPC's memorandum & questions. When discussing question 4, Chair C. Seybolt proposed to endorse the statement in the CCRPC memorandum; however, the Commission could not come to an agreement on whether to endorse the statement or not. Mr. Bennett also advised that local constraints should be equally restrictive to all development, which Commissioner Edson advised that the Commission had to be careful, as a constraint could unintentionally restrict a desired use.

[7:10] Chair C. Seybolt proposed that Staff Member Strniste forward a copy of the response to CCRPC to the Planning Commission and Energy Committee.

[7:11] Mr. Bennett and Chair C. Seybolt discussed the intent of the Alternative Transportation Task Force recommendation the Planning Commission made to the Selectboard. Mr. Bennett stated the Energy Committee was surprised to learn that the Selectboard started a committee to look at alternative transportation methods rather than allowing the Energy Committee to explore alternative means. Mr. Bennett inquired with the Planning Commission about signing onto a

memorandum he plans to write recommending that the Selectboard utilize members of different boards and committees rather than starting a new committee. Chair C. Seybolt advised that Commission thought it would be valuable for the public to be involved. The Planning Commission agreed with the Energy Committee sending the memorandum. Commissioner Drew inquired about going directly to the Selectboard and asking at the next meeting. Mr. Bennett did not object; however, the Energy Committee wanted to take a “soft approach,” as the Selectboard may think the new committee answers the issues at hand.

- [7:19] The Planning Commission briefly discussed the response that Staff Member Strniste would be sending to CCRPC. Commissioner Glidden advised that the phrase “none at this time” be added to question 3.
- [7:22] While a quorum from the May 31, 2017 meeting was not present to approve those minutes, the Chair inquired about a few actions that occurred at that meeting. Specifically, she stated that she would reach out to the Conservation Commission and ask if there was anything in the Bylaws that they were uncomfortable with, or anything they wished to add to the Bylaws.
- [7:25] Commissioner Drew gave a quick overview of the drinking water conference he attended. He provided the Commission a list of references pertaining to drinking water. Commissioner Drew also advised that the Selectboard is aware of the FEMA & State funds that are available to those Towns with a Hazard Mitigation Plan, which the Town has.
- [7:30] The Commission began a discussion about the Bylaw updates. Chair C. Seybolt advised that they cannot separate the potential new zoning district in the center from the other updates and create two separate ballot items. Commissioner Drew clarified that the purpose of the new Underhill Center Zoning District is to help relieve property owners from the current restrictions.
- [7:36] Staff Member Strniste provided an overview of the information he provided to the Planning Commission, specifically the chart of the properties in the proposed Underhill Center District.
- [7:37] Commissioner Edson proposed that the landowners would be able to use as part of their acreage calculation land to the middle of the road. Commissioner Glidden proposed matching the Underhill Flats acreage requirement. Commissioner Gregson advised that the lots in the Center are smaller than those in the flats. Chair C. Seybolt asked the Commission how they will respond when asked if this will open up the Center for development, and why that this change needs to occur. The Commission responded that the Town Plan calls for development in the two centers, which would allow the rural areas to stay rural. The Commission also advised that this would help allow the landowners to construct structures without requiring DRB approval, thus helping ease restrictions. Commissioner Drew asked if this new district would help with municipal water and sewage. The Commission agreed that one acre would suffice for Underhill Center.
- [7:51] Staff Member Strniste provided a better explanation of the chart he provided to help the Commission better understand the data being shown. The Commission agreed that the frontage requirement for the new district should be 100 feet. The Commission also agreed that a five-foot front setback would suffice. Commissioner Drew asked why the previous proposed update failed, which the Commission advised that misinformation was provided. The Commission agreed that 15-foot setbacks would suffice for the side & rear setbacks. **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to accept the dimensional requirements as presented by Staff Member Strniste with modification that the acreage requirement be adjusted to one acre.** Commissioner Glidden accepted the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Drew. **Motion was approved unanimously.**



[8:05] Staff Member Strniste suggested that the Planning Commission move the proposed bylaw update vote to November 18, 2018, during the federal election. Commissioners Seybolt and Gregson were opposed to the idea. While Commissioner Glidden expressed his indifference, he stated that the Commission was likely to have the bylaws approved in November rather than in March. Commissioner Edson was receptive of the idea of moving the proposal to November. Commissioner Drew was opposed. Commissioner Gregson did not want to prolong the vote any longer, and Chair C. Seybolt advised that they could propose bylaw updates in both March and November.

[8:14] Chair C. Seybolt advised that at the next meeting, the Commission will be addressing what else needs to be completed, creating a publicity plan, and confirming that the Development Review Board's questions have been addressed. The next meeting will be July 6.

[8:15] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to adjourn.** Commissioner Gregson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Edson. **Motion approved unanimously.**

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Respectfully Submitted By:  
Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the June 15, 2017 meeting were accepted this 6<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2017.

  
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C. Seybolt, Planning Commission Vice Chair